

May 30, 2007

[Unsubscribe](#)

[Update My Profile](#)



U.S. Congressman

Mark Steven Kirk

Proudly serving the people of the 10th District of Illinois



**** U.S. Congressman Mark Steven Kirk, Proudly Serving the People of the 10th District of Illinois ****

[Website](#) - [About Mark](#) - [Press Room](#) - [Constituent Services](#) - [Contact](#)

E-MAIL UPDATES

Yes, please send me legislative updates directly from Congress.*

[Click Here](#)

*By subscribing to my e-mail updates, you are authorizing me to send e-mail updates from my office to your e-mail account.

Kirk In the News...

6/16/2009: [Lawmakers offer 'practical' health reform plan](#)

6/16/2009: [Moderates to Present Their Health Care Plan](#)

6/16/2009: [Rep. Kirk wants tougher penalties for super pot](#)

Please Feel Free to Tell a Friend

E-mail:

E-mail:

E-mail:

[Send](#)

Dear Friends,

Illinois is home to only 60 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, and less than half of that lakefront property is open to the public. That is why for the past three years I have worked with the U.S. Navy to transfer 77 acres of shoreline bluffs in Highland Park to Openlands, a local conservation organization. The Openlands Lakefront Preserve will help restore and protect the area for future generations to enjoy.

This is an important step to increasing public access to one of the Midwest's crown jewels - Lake Michigan. You can read more about the lakefront preserve in a Chicago Tribune article below, or you can download an Openlands presentation on the preserve [here](#).

It is an honor to represent you in Congress.

Very truly yours,

Sincerely,

Mark Kirk
Member of Congress

Chicago Tribune, May 24, 2007
Ft. Sheridan bluff with a view
BY SUSAN KUCZKA
Staff Writer

Public access to the bluffs overlooking Lake Michigan on the North Shore is as scarce as the rare birds and plants that make the unique ecosystem their home. But an estimated \$8 million restoration project under way near historic Ft. Sheridan in Highland Park includes a welcome mat for all nature lovers.

The project was begun this spring and it includes a 1-mile trail at the top of the 60-foot craggy, tree-lined bluff overlooking the lake and beach—shoreline that has been off-limits to the general public for more than a century.

"We're committed to opening this property up to everyone," said Joyce O'Keefe, deputy director of Openlands, a non-profit conservation group overseeing the project.

Plans for the 77-acre site also include restoration of the beach and three ravines, home to more than 100 species of birds, including peregrine falcons and the threatened Henslow's sparrow, and rare plants such as buffaloberry and seaside spurge.

Scheduled to open in phases over the next three years, the new Openlands Lakeshore Preserve at Ft. Sheridan will provide one of only a few views of the lake from bluffs carved by glaciers thousands of years ago.

The trail will be the only one open to the public on the bluffs, O'Keefe said. Multimillion-dollar estates and summer cottages have occupied most of the bluffs from Winnetka to Lake Bluff since the late 1800s.

Construction of the former Army base, named after Civil War Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, who championed its creation, began in 1888. Originally built to make troops available in case of civil unrest like the Haymarket labor riots of 1886 that left at least 10 Chicago police officers and labor demonstrators dead, the fort served mostly as a training and administrative base until it closed in 1993.

The Army and Navy still station reserve units at the former fort, but a large chunk of the 714 acres it once occupied is now owned by Highland Park and the Lake County Forest Preserve District. The district built a three-quarter mile beach trail on the north end of the fort two years ago, giving the public its first access to the shoreline since Ft. Sheridan opened.

When the Navy indicated it would be willing to give up some of its property, Openlands sought federal legislation to acquire the property at no cost with the stipulation it be preserved for the public's enjoyment.

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), a Navy Reserve officer who lives in the Town of Ft. Sheridan housing development on the 125-acre Highland Park part of the property, helped broker the unusual land transfer in 2004. In March, Openlands took ownership of about one-third of its 77 acres, including the Bartlett Ravine.

The ravine, next to the Town of Ft. Sheridan, has experienced both natural and manmade erosion that has weakened some slopes that wind down to the lake. Openlands hopes to build a 100-foot buffer along the top of the ravine and bluffs to reduce the velocity of storm-water runoff, O'Keefe said.

Openlands officials met last week with Town of Ft. Sheridan residents to discuss the project and to round up a few volunteers, O'Keefe said. "We're hoping we can get our new neighbors excited." Jim Fitzgerald, who lives at the Town of Ft. Sheridan, said reaction from residents has been overwhelmingly positive. "We're all very excited about it because we know it will be done right," he said.

Openlands officials hope to attract donations from the public and private sectors. The beach is expected to open next summer, O'Keefe said.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Website: <http://www.house.gov/kirk/>

Washington, DC Office:

1030 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: 202-225-4835
Fax: 202-225-0837

Northbrook Office:

707 Skokie Blvd, Suite 350
Northbrook, IL 60062
Phone: 847-940-0202
Fax: 847-940-7143

[Update My Profile](#) - [Unsubscribe](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)